



Bitterroot National Forest

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NEWS RELEASE

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"Bitterroot NF Releases its 2006 Annual Monitoring Report"

Hamilton, Montana, October 10 — Did the hot, smoked filled days of July and August this year make you start thinking about wildland fire trends on the Bitterroot National Forest?

Have you ever wondered how the Forest's battle against invasive plants is going?

Or perhaps you are interested in how populations of elk, cutthroat trout, or northern goshawk are faring?

The answer to these questions, and hundreds of other pieces of information concerning resource programs on the Bitterroot National Forest have recently been published in the Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report for 2006.

The Monitoring Report is the latest in a series of such reports published nearly annually since the Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan was approved in 1987. "To have such a long period of monitoring data used to evaluate conditions and trends across the Forest is a notable achievement," stated Sue Heald, Planning and Recreation Staff Officer. "This information helps us make better, more informed management decisions."

The Fire Management section of the report, for example, tracks the number of fires and acres burned each year across the forest; and whether they are caused by lightning or humans. Another table shows the acres burned in categories such as wilderness, non-wilderness, roaded lands, and inventoried roadless lands.

The Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystems section includes over 60 pages of data and summaries. The report describes the work the Bitterroot Forest is accomplishing in protecting and restoring water and stream habitats for a variety of plant and animal species. Perhaps more importantly, the results of this work are monitored over several years to judge its success.

Forest Supervisor Dave Bull thinks the data evaluations are the most important part of the annual monitoring report. They provide the basis for managers to evaluate how well forest management practices are working. "The report helps us identify changes that we need to make in how we manage the Bitterroot National Forest for native plants, wild animals, and for people," stated Bull.

The 2006 report can be viewed online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot/projects/>
Copies (compact disk or paper) are available on request from the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1801 N 1st, Hamilton, MT 59847 (406) 363-7100. The report can also be viewed at the Bitterroot National Forest District Offices in Stevensville, Darby, Sula, or West Fork.